

Escuela: Fears and Aspirations on the Distant Learning Modality among the Parents of the Ati Learners in Capiz, Philippines amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study explored the challenges, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of the indigenous peoples' children in the Ati Community in Dumarao, Capiz, Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic. It employed the participatory action research using the qualitative research design. Data were gathered through unstructured interview and the results were thematically analyzed. Among the fears expressed by the parent participants in the education of their children were the heavy workload, fear of the pandemic itself, unsupervised learning of their children, and congested learning environment. With these challenges, they have gained strength with their coping mechanisms on participating in the makeshift classroom, connecting with the community for the answers of children's modules, and renting of the makeshift classroom for the informal classroom sessions. Despite of the fears and coping mechanisms, the Ati parents aspired that everything gets better. Their aspirations are on the hopefulness for the future, perseverance to live normally, to rise from poverty, and breakage of cultural barriers. The most feasible interventions programs were "Materials to work with and a Place for Learning," which is framed to providing the students with the school supplies to ensure that the learners would perform their tasks in their studies; and "Literacy Program for the Ati People," an extension activity that will focus to teach the Ati parents with the basics of literacy. Overall, the Ati community is collectively aiding one another to advance their learners' progress with whatever resources that are available to them.

Keywords: Qualitative Research Design, Covid-19 Coping Mechanism, Indigenous People, New Learning Modalities, Community-based Collaboration

Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has changed many things in the world. One of the industries there was put to a virtual standstill is the education industry. As governments in many countries continued to impose lockdowns, schools were forced to close due to COVID-19 (Toquero, 2020; Viner, Russell, Croker, Packer, Ward, Stansfield, & Booy 2020; Reimers,

Published/ publié in *Res Militaris* (resmilitaris.net), vol.13, n°3, March Spring (2023)

Schleicher, 2020). However, to continue the education of students, some schools immediately shifted to online and distant teaching and learning modalities (Toquero, 2020). Some teachers recorded and uploaded their lessons online for the students to access. Some were even more innovative and used Google Classrooms, WebQuest, and other online sites, but most needed to be prepared (Fox, 2007). As educators both in upland and coastal areas here in Capiz, Philippines, we have witnessed how challenging this new educational set-up is to many students, especially the poor and those living in the far-flung areas that lack gadgets and equipment for online classes and also internet connectivity problem. The modular mode also provided many challenges ranging from lack of transportation to difficulty in crossing from one town to the others because of security and health protocols implemented by different local government units. The intention of the paper is to explore the different challenges, coping mechanisms, and aspirations of the indigenous students in the Ati Community in Dumarao, Capiz, during the Covid-19 pandemic and also their fears and worries in relation to their lives and also education.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the fears encountered by the parents in engaging their children with the new learning modality, identified their coping mechanisms, determined their aspirations, and formulated the appropriate intervention programs to address the needs of the participant. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What fears are encountered by the Ati parents in engaging their children with the new learning modalities? (2) What are the coping mechanisms practiced by the participants to engage their children in adapting to the new learning modality? (3) What are the aspirations of the Ati parents for their children in adapting to the new normal learning modality? (4) What intervention program/s can be designed to address the needs and aspirations of the participants in terms of learning deliveries?

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employed the participatory action research method of the qualitative research design. The participants in this study are the Ati parents in Dumarao, Capiz. They were selected through the inclusion/exclusion criteria set by the researchers. The data collection was done through individual interviews, participatory observations, note taking, and video documentation. Ethical considerations were observed through the permit from the council of elders and the execution of the Informed Consent Form.

Research Informants

The participants were selected through the guide of the following criteria:

1. They should be a member of the Ati Community
2. They should have children studying within the school year covered (pandemic)
3. They should have agreed with the terms and conditions stated in the informed consent form

During the visitation period, the researchers were able to interview ten (10) Ati parents who allowed their children to take part in face-to-face classes within their community in order to be able to answer the weekly modules assigned to them by their school. Table 1 shows the first name, age, and educational attainment of the parents that were interviewed.

Table 1. *Profile of the Ati Parents as participants in Aglalana, Dumarao*

Name of the Ati Parent	Age	Educational Attainment
1. Erlinda	41	N/A
2. Mylene	34	N/A
3. Ailine	41	Elementary Level
4. Anna Rose	32	High School Level
5. Marlyn	27	Elementary Level
6. Jenelyn	33	High School Level
7. Melanie	30	Elementary Level
8. Mary Grace	30	High School Level
9. Evangelyn	33	High School Level
10. Luisa	43	Vocational Graduate

Based on table 1, the Ati participants are mostly adults-middle age adults in terms of age groups. All of them were not able to finish high school, and one was able to finish a vocational course. In terms of livelihood, their day-to-day endeavors vary depending on their need and season: from tending their farmlands, hunting, foraging, and creating indigenous crafts.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was done thematically (reflexive thematic analysis), adapting the process of Saldana (2009). After transcribing, the researchers mapped the significant concepts. In this study, principal data were derived from the lengthy interviews conducted with the participants. Moreover, assembling tables and charts assisted with a cluster of codes were done. After clustering the codes, the researchers described the meaning of each code that rose by linking them to the literature reviewed.

Results and Discussions

Through the assistance of the para-teacher assigned at Aglalana, Dumarao, Capiz, and the community pastor who is also an Ati elder, the researchers were able to interview the parents of the Ati learners who were attending limited face-to-face classes in a makeshift classroom. The classroom that was utilized by the learners was a rented-out cottage beside a two-way road that could accommodate at least 20 students. Further details regarding the environmental learning conditions of the Ati learners were discussed in the results.

Modular Instruction assisted by the Para-teacher was Adopted by the Ati Learners

Due to the geographical location and remoteness of the Ati Community from the heart of the municipality of Dumarao, Capiz, the Ati learners had to adopt the modular instruction that is currently being implemented in the public schools. Electronic educational devices such as projectors, televisions, radios, and other technologies are primarily out of reach from the hands of the community. However, the parents themselves need more knowledge to assist their children in answering the modules. With this, the local government unit and the local education sector find it necessary to assist the indigenous peoples' learners.

With the help of a Para-teacher who was also an Ati that was hired by the local government unit, she was able to guide the Ati children in learning and answering their modules. The para-teacher grouped the Ati learners according to their grade level. Each grade level had a specific time scheduled by the para-teacher for their session. Moreover, in order to

attract the children to attend their session, the para-teacher provided snacks for them, which came from a not-so-attractive salary she received from the LGU.

Fears Encountered by the Ati Parents in Engaging their Children to the New Learning Modality

The first concerns reflected within the statements of the Ati parents regarding the modular instruction were that the content that was assigned to the learners, who are their children was a little bit too much. The weekly workload that the Ati learners have contributed to a lot of supposed inconvenience to the day-to-day lives of the learners as well as the parents.

Baw ka duro-duro gid ya sir sang salabton ka akun puya, hamakon mo grade three palang sya sir tapos isang ka tambak nga papel na ang iya gina sabtan. (Gosh, my child has much schoolwork to finish. If you think about it, my child is just in the third grade, and she already has tons of paperwork.) -Parent 2

Tan-awa bala sir, English, Math, Science, Filipino, Music, P.E., Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao. Ka damo-damo gid sir sa kihinanglan sabtan tapos waay man ko kabalo sir kun paano ku man ni sabton kay asta manlang ko sir grade 1. Manug garab manlang ko ya sir sang gamay pa ku. (Take a look at this sir. English, Math, Science, Filipino, Music, P.E., Humanities. There are many topics that need answering, and I don't even know how to because I was only able to reach the first grade. I'm just a simple farmer since I was a child sir.)-Parent 7

Daw indi ko gid ya sir ma tutukan akon it puya sa iya pag iskwela, naga kadto ko sa iban nga lugar kun aga asta mag hapon para mang garab kag para may pamakal man ko pagkaun. Sa ka damo-damo sir, kun kis-a ga kopya nalang kami sa may ara na sang mga sabat. (I can't really focus on my child's studies because I'm traveling to other places to farm for the entire day so I can buy something for us to eat. Due to the large quantity of work, we'd copy from others who are already finished with their answers.)-Parent 5

The participants were mostly concerned with the number of tasks that were given to the Ati learners. The parents (both the mother and the father) usually spend most of their days working the land, tilling the fields, laboring, and all the other tasks that are up for grabs within their local community. Due to their heavy workload, they are unable to focus on the module(s) that their children have. The 7th respondent shared that she studied only up to the 1st Grade, which puts her at a disadvantage when teaching her child, who is in the third grade. This case is also the same with most members of the Ati community (only a selected few were able to go to college, and an even fewer number of college graduates)

One of the participants finished grade school (old curriculum) and was able to reach 2nd-year high school; she was concerned with the structure of the modules because they needed to be user (child)-friendly. (Respondent proceeds to get a copy of a module and show it to the researchers) tan-awa bala sir oh. Grade two palang ni nga material pero tan-awa bala sir (the Ati Respondent pointed towards one of the items). Paano ini maka himo repleksyon akon puya, nga indi ni gani siya ka sulat sang iban nga mga tinaga sa hilihaynon kag bisan sa English. (Take a look at this sir. My child is still in the second grade but look at this. How can my child make a reflection when he can't even write in Hiligayon¹ or English?) – Parent 4

Upon reviewing their module, it was mostly leaning towards higher order skills which were claimed to be inappropriate for lower levels that were supposed to be focused on the

¹ Is an Austronesian regional language spoken in the Philippines by about 9.1 million people, predominantly in Western Visayas and Soccsksargen, most of whom belong to the Hiligaynon people

LOTS rather than the HOTS. The parents' fears were whether or not their children would be able to learn from the current modality with little to no guidance.

Regarding the physiological aspect, the parents fear for the safety of their children from the pandemic. During the first few quarters of the pandemic, they were too isolated to be instantaneously affected by Covid19. After a few months after the 1st year of the pandemic, one of the Ati elders informed the researchers that covid finally reached them and they were further isolated from the rest of the community. This made the Ati community more vigilant and wearier in terms of preventing the further spread of the pandemic.

Nakulbaan ko gani ya sir kay amon nga chieftain nagka covid, pati ang pamilya nila. Kun mag nilakat ako para lang maka pangayu bulig para sa module sang puya ko, basi kami malatnan man sang sakit. Isa pa gid na ka rason kung ngaa daw indi gid kami mag sugot kun kis-a nga padal-on to ang mga puya namon kay teacher renrose bangud sang covid (I was very nervous sir because our chieftain his family was infected with Covid. There's a risk of us catching the disease if we go outside and find help from someone in order to answer my child's modules. That's also one of the reasons why we are reluctant to send our child to teacher Renrose.) - Parent 1.

Mayu man to gani kay may ara ka mi sang daw gamay nga iskwelahan para sa mga bata para ma sabtan nila ang ila module, kaso akun lang ya, ga tumpok to bi sila samtang ga klase. Ka gamay-gamay sang lugar didto, muna nga daw ka delikado gid. (We find it convenient sir to have a place like a small school for our children to answer their modules. My only problem is that they're too congested while having a class. There is not enough room that's why it's a risk for us.) - Parent 3

May ara ko sir parente nga naka lapak na college sir, kung kis-a gina bilin ko to akun puya sa iya kag kun kis-a gani, gina padala ko nalang to ang module para sabton niya. Wala gid sir, ka budlay gid ya sir kung dunganon ku tanan (I have a relative sir who was able to reach the college level. Sometimes I leave my child to her, and sometimes I just let her answer the entire module. There's nothing else we could do and it's so hard if I do everything at once.) – Parent 10

Based on the statements above, the Ati parents are still wary of the pandemic. It justifies their reason for not sending their child to the makeshift classroom founded by teacher Renrose (the para-teacher) due to the unforeseen risks of face-to-face contact.

Table 2 shows the thematic analysis of the statements of the Ati parents regarding the fears that they have encountered while engaging in distance learning.

Table 2. *Thematic Analysis of the Fears of the Ati Parents*

CODE	CATEGORY	Theme(s) Extracted
Heavy workload Fear of the Pandemic Unsupervised Learning Congested Learning Environment	School Tasks Pandemic Learning Delivery	Negative Learning Environment Due to the Stress brought by the COVID19 Pandemic

In general, their fears regarding the engagement of their children in modular learning revolve around the negative learning environment that was caused by the pandemic. Ati parents had to live on subsistence, even without the pandemic. This global crisis only made it harder for them to balance their attention to their daily laborious tasks and their children who are studying.

After this phase of the conversation, the researchers transitioned to inquiring about their coping mechanisms and different ways in order to deal with the reoccurring challenges that they have in terms of the learning process and growth of their children.

Coping Mechanisms Practiced by the Ati Parents to engage their children in the new learning modality

The coping mechanisms of the Ati parents differ in each household due to the different needs and livelihoods of their families. One of the participants opened up a statement regarding the para-teacher Renrose and a small classroom that she founded in order to aid the Ati learners in answering their modules.

Sang una sir, indi gid ko ya luyag nga ipadala akon puya didto day ma'am Renrose bangud sang pandemic kag bangud ga bulig-bulig man amun puya sang mga ulubahun sa balay. Pero sa subong, gina pakadto ko siya didto para ma sabtan ya iya module kag para mapadayon niya iya iskwela. Antos-antos lang gamay sir ah. (I have a relative sir who was able to reach the college level. Sometimes I leave my child to her, and sometimes I just let her answer the entire module. There's nothing else we could do and it's so hard if I do everything at once.) – Parent 9 gapamalay-balay ko sir. Ga pamangkot ko sa iban nga balay kung may module man sila nga parehos sa akon puya. Gapamangkot lang ko dayun kun paano ni sabton. Hai, kun kis-a indi man ko ka tutok sini bangud damo man ko ubra. Dira ko na dayun gina padala akon puya kay ma'am renrose, kaso daw ka delikado gihapon sir bangud ka covid. (I go from house-to-house sir. I ask people around the community if their children have the same module as my child. I would then ask them if they knew how to answer the questions. I can't really focus on this because I have a lot of work to do. What I'd do is I would send my child to ma'am renrose, still, it's a bit of a risk because of covid.)-Parent 6

Maayo man to gani sir kay ara si teacher renrose, bisan papa-ano maka bulig gid man siya sa ulubahun sang amun mga bata. (It's a good thing sir because we have teacher renrose. Somehow, she could help with the tasks of our children) – Parent 3 nami gid sir, maayo gid kay may ara kami diri maistra nga Ati man. Kung kis-a gani, si teacher renrose pa ang naga hatag pamahaw kag panyaga sa amun mga bata. Dako gid ya nga bulig ang ubra ni ma'am renrose, bisan pigado gid lang ya sila, ga hatag gid sa guihapon si ma'am sang iya makayanan sa amun mga puya. (It is good sir because we have a teacher who is also an Ati. Sometimes, teacher renrose herself would give breakfast and dinner to our children. What teacher renrose do is of big help to us. Even though she has almost nothing, she still gives whatever she can to our children.)– Parent 4

Gina tinguha-an ko man sir nga maka pulupamangkot sa palibot sir eh kung bakante ko. Ang guwa niya daw ga tuon man ko mismo, mapuslan ko man sa adlaw-adlaw ko nga pag pangabuhi. Daw duwa na kami sir nga naga iskwella. (I do my best sir to ask people around during my free time. It looks as if I'm learning as well too, and I am able to use it in my day-to-day life. It's like both of us are going to school at the same time.)– Parent 5

Based on the statements, the participants have their own approaches to dealing with the gaps that they have in terms of their children's learning process. Most of them are letting their children participate in the makeshift classroom that teacher Renrose founded.

Some of them would reach out to their neighbors and community to ask for help, and some would ask directly to their relatives who are more knowledgeable with the structure of the learners' modules.

The researchers then went to the location of teacher Renrose to ask for her management strategies, teaching approaches, and views on the current situation that she and her learners are facing in the new normal.

Prior to this study, a capstone project entitled Kumbuyanay was conducted. Along with the progress of the project, the project leader was able to gather the information that there was an Ati teacher that was teaching Ati learners within their community (Biclar, 2022). During that time, teacher Renrose was able to build a small classroom that could accommodate 8-15 students at a time using her small salary. When this study was conducted, the researchers reached out to teacher Renrose. Her facilities were significantly improved and could accommodate at least 20 students at a time.

“Ining classroom ni sir, gina arkilahan ko lang ini. Ka damo-damo na bi sa ila sir, indi na kaya nga I accommodate sang amon barung-barong ang ka damu-on sang mga bata diri... diri sir, at least ang bilog nga barangay namon pwede ko na ma tudluan. Gina tunga-tunga ko lang sir ila schedule depende sa ila grades (We are only renting this place sir. There are a lot of them and they won't fit in our barung-barong². In this place sir, we can accommodate and teach our entire barangay. I just divide the schedule depending on their grades.)

Mina mag tudlo ko sir, gina tunga-tunga ko gid. Grade 1-6, kung kis-a gina upod ko ang different grades. Grade 1 kag 2, grade 3 kag 4, and so on sir. Semi-traditional kag constructive approach gid sir akon gina gamit mag tudlo, para kahit papaa-no ma learn man nila nga valuable ang gina tudlo ko sa adlaw-adlaw nila nga pangabuhi... (...that's why divide them into groups when I teach them sir. Grades 1-6, sometimes I merge the different grades together. Grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4, and so on sir. I use a Semi-traditional and constructive approach when I teach them, so they will somehow learn that what I teach is valuable to their livelihood.)

Pareho sa guihaon sir sang nag ligad, ga set aside gid ko ya sir sang dako nga portion ka sweldo ko para mahatagan ko sila pamahaw kag panyaga para man maka bulig ako sa ila kag sa ginikanan nila mismo.” (...just like last time, I'd set aside a portion of my salary so I could buy breakfast and lunch to my students, and at the same time, help the parents themselves.) – Teacher Renrose

By renting a small hut alongside an access road, teacher Renrose was able to accommodate more students in order to aid as many Ati learners as she could. With the expansion, she also had to reserve a large portion of her salary in order to help feed the children during and after classes. Through this consistent effort of teacher Renrose, they are able to cope with the demands that are needed by modular instruction during the new normal.

Table 3 shows the thematic analysis of the statements of the Ati parents regarding the coping mechanisms that they had been doing in order to address their problems regarding their children's education.

² a makeshift shack made of bamboo

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of the Coping Strategies of the Ati Parents

CODE	CATEGORY	Theme(s) Extracted
Participation in the Makeshift Classroom Connecting with the Community for Answers Renting a Makeshift Classroom Parent-Children Learning	Modular Instruction	Community-based Collaboration in Learning

Due to the fact that they are partially isolated from the rest of the communities, the Ati parents relied on the help of their fellow community members in order to cope with the requirements that the learners have with their school. Based on the statements, it is an informal form of a community-based collaboration in which the parents of the community openly share their physical and intellectual resources in order to create a more positive learning environment and in answering the modules of their learners. Through these coping mechanisms, the parents are able to learn as well as aid in guiding the learning process of their children.

Aspirations of the Ati Parents for their Children in Adapting to the New Normal Learning Modality

The new normal modalities and deliveries had its pros and cons throughout the years which gave a significant impact as to how learning is delivered to the learners. The Ati community is no exemption to this drastic pedagogical change. Despite all of these factors, the Ati parents and their Ati teacher have their own aspirations for the future of their children.

Akon manlang gusto sir, mahatagan sang maayo nga puturo akon mga bata. Inang indi sila sir mangabudlay bisan wala na kami. Bisani tani sa modular lang nga sistema, makahibalo man ang akon mga puya sang ila gina tun-an. (I want to give our children a better future to an extent where they won't have difficulties even though we're gone. I hope that even though it's just a modular system, they can learn something from their lessons.) – Parent 1 amu na sir, damo gid ko handom sa akon mga puya. Makita ko lang sila tani nga maayo ang pangabuhi, lipay na ako sir. Ga pangabay gid ko ya sir nga tani maka balik na tanan sa normal, kay mas maayo gid ya nga ato sila sa iskwelahan sa ila pag tuon. (...that's it sir, I have many aspirations for my children. I'd be happy if see them having a prosperous life. I'm hoping that everything will go back to normal because it is ideal for them to learn at school.) – Parent 6

Bisan modular lang na sir, gina ubra ko man ang tanan-tanan para ma sabtan man sang akon puya ang iya mga module. Kay man, ga pati gid ako nga sa ulihi magin maginhawa man ni ila kabuhi bangud sang ila pang himakas sa iskwela. Sa subong huo, ka budlay, pero ma pursige lang ta ah... Para man in isa ila. (Even though it's just modular, I still do my best so that my child can answer their module. The reason is that I believe that the life of my children in the future will prosper due to their efforts in their studies. Right now, yes, it's hard, but we are doing to best we can... All of these are for them.) – Parent 2

Ako sir wala ako tinapusan, pero ga handom gid ko ya nga makatapos akon puya. Kay man, tanawa amon sitwasyon subong sir. Ka budlay-budlay gid ya mangita it tarong nga ubra. Mina nga bisan amo lang ko sini, ga himikas gid ako nga mag pangita alternatibo nga paagi para maka sabat akon puya sa iya module. (In my case sir, I wasn't able to finish my studies, but I am aspiring that my child will. If you take a look at our situation, it's very difficult to find any jobs. Even though I'm just like this, I'm doing my best to find alternatives for my child so that he can answer his module.) – Parent 7

Mina gani sir hambal ko gina, gapangapa-ngapa na ako pangita bulig para ma tudluan ko akun puya sang iya ulubrahun sa iya module. Para man ini sa iya sir, para bisan madula na kami sa ulihi, tawhay na ya ang pangabuhi sang amun puya. (...just like what I've said, I've been doing everything I can to seek for help so I can let my child answer the modules. This is for her sir, so that even though we are already gone, her life would be problem-free.) – Parent 5

The Ati parents are holding on to hope for a better future for their children despite the changes that occurred with the educational system. Each of them is looking forward to a better future for their children despite the day-to-day challenges that these parents are facing. They themselves are actively adapting to the abrupt changes in order to bring out the most learning in their children's modules.

These aspirations could open a door towards helping the parents in guiding their children throughout their journey in education.

Teacher Renrose also voiced her aspirations for the future generations of the Ati community.

I'm one of the first sir nga naka graduate sang college sa amun nga community. Gina pangabay ko man ni nga ang mga bata nga ni sa akon paliibot maka graduate man. Kay kun wala ka bi sir tinapusan, ka budlay mangita ubra. Tapos permi pa kami gina discriminate bangod sang amun skin color. 'Haha ka itom-itom sa imo' or sometimes hambalan nila kami nga 'negro/negra'. Amo lang gid ni ang paagi sir para ma angat namon ang status sang amon community sir, paagi sa literacy kag maka tapos sang colegio. (I'm one of the first sir that was able to graduate from college within our community. I am hoping that these children around me would be able to graduate as well. Finding jobs are hard if you don't have a degree. They would then frequently discriminate us because of our skin color "Haha, you're very black" or sometimes, say words to us like "negro/negra. This is the only way sir for us to lift the status of our community, through literacy and finishing college.) – Teacher Renrose

Teacher Renrose is looking forward to a future where the current generation of children will be fully educated and have a prosperous future. According to her, education is the only way that they could rise above stagnation, poverty, and discrimination.

Table 4 shows the thematic analysis of the statements of the Ati parents regarding their aspirations in the new normal delivery.

Table 4. *Thematic Analysis of the Aspirations of the Ati Parents*

CODE	CATEGORY	Theme Extracted
Hopefulness for the Future	Anticipation	Brighter future for the next Ati Generation
Perseverance	Steadfast Effort	
Rise from Poverty	Fighting Inequity	
Breaking Cultural Barriers		

The Ati parents expressed their positive outlook for the future of the younger generation of their community. They also expressed that they will continue to subsist and persevere in order to be able to give the best learning conditions and lifestyle for their children. All of their statements boils down to creating a brighter future for the next generation of the Ati community in Aglalana.

Intervention Program Design that Addresses Needs and Aspirations of the Participants

According to the findings, the Ati community itself is very dedicated to advancing its educational standing but needs to include more resources and knowledge in order to sustain its efforts in helping its young generation progress through the academe. The following interventions/recommendations address their concerns for a more viable and sustainable form of learning.

Materials to Work With and a Place of Learning

The first intervention program that is highly viable based on the participants' statements would be providing the students with a stable supply of annual school supplies in order to ensure that the learners would be able to perform their tasks and document their progress in their studies.

By reaching out to the people of Capiz and with the help of different partner agencies, the university can provide the Ati children with reading materials, illustrations, realia, and other necessities that are essential to meaningful learning and a positive learning environment.

The university may also reach out to the LGUs, DepED, PTCAO, or other external partners in order to request a strategic location that may serve as the learning environment for the Ati people.

Literacy Program for the Ati People

In order to address the difficulty of the parents in teaching their children regarding the weekly modules, the university can set up an extension program that focuses on a literacy program that focuses on teaching the Ati parents the basics of literacy. This program will give the parents more autonomy in teaching the content of the module(s) to their children. At the same time, it could also help the parents in grasping new concepts as they learn along with the progress of their children.

The Colleges of Education of CAPSU as a whole could also create an extension program wherein the 4th year student-teachers/interns can be given the opportunity to comprehensively teach the content of the module to the Ati learners and the parents as well. The student-teachers should use modern ways and educational technologies in order to spark the creativity and motivation of the learners.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the gathered data, the Ati participants are mostly adults ranging from their late 20s up to their early 40s. They are lacking of a complete formal education due to their location and financial capacity to support themselves while studying. Their livelihood depends on the season and the demands of the Ati community. Their primary sources of income are farming and crafts. Others are engaged in basic labor such as construction, charcoal making, and other physical-intensive tasks. They are also engaged in foraging and hunting in order to diversify their food sources.

During the duration of the pandemic, the Ati community had adjusted to the country's alternative distance learning modalities in order to secure health and safety protocols. Due to the lack of modern technology, the Ati's learners were subjected to following modular instruction. They do not have access to an uninterruptible internet connection, laptops, and modern phones that are used for digital/online learning.

Due to the initiative of the municipality and the Ati teacher, who was one of the first members of the Ati community that graduated college, they were able to reconvert modular instruction to limited face-to-face instruction. It could be more efficient due to a need for more facilities, learning tools and equipment, and a venue for learning. Still, it is sufficient to simulate a regular classroom environment.

The fears and concerns of the parents are mostly the risks of exposure to covid-19. They are also concerned with the level of learning that modular instruction has and their inability to provide for the intellectual needs of their children due to their insufficient educational background. They also have to balance out their time between their children and heavy workload. The modules being given to the students are also a concern to the Ati parents due to their need to be more user-friendly and their scaling difficulty.

The combined aspirations of the Ati community are geared toward the success of future generations. In terms of their aspirations for the new normal learning modality, the parents are willing to do everything that they can in order to ensure that the learning process is embedded within the hearts and minds of their children despite its inconveniences, challenges, and benefits. Overall, the Ati community is collectively aiding one another in order to advance their learners' progress in learning with whatever resources are available to them.

The feasible intervention programs that can be implemented are as follows: "Materials to work with and a Place for Learning" and "Literacy Program for the Ati People." Their community is lacking in equipment, a proper learning environment, and essential knowledge in order to advance their collective effort further. With their current aspirations, dedication, and willingness to learn, further interventions and resources can be dedicated to the Ati community.

Based on the drawn conclusions, the following recommendations were formulated:

Further profiling and in-depth interview of the Ati parents from other Ati communities is highly recommended in order to diversify the intervention options of future similar research and extension efforts. The LGUs and the Department of Education could provide additional alternatives in terms of learning modalities, learning equipment, and additional facilities to the Ati communities. Regular extension activities participated either by the students or the CAPSU faculty can be formulated in order to aid the Ati teacher in teaching the content of the modules to the Ati learners. By doing so, the Ati learners will be exposed to different teaching styles, learning materials, and learning environments. The Ati parents may be given a series of literacy programs in order for them to be capable of teaching their children about their school tasks and modules. This can be useful even after the event of the pandemic. Livelihood training, capacity building programs, production chain training, and other livelihood programs can be implemented. This can have a positive impact on their community's economy, which will enable them to afford the cost of letting the younger generation of the Ati community study in higher education institutions. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to formulate a complete training program that can address other concerns of other Ati communities.

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